

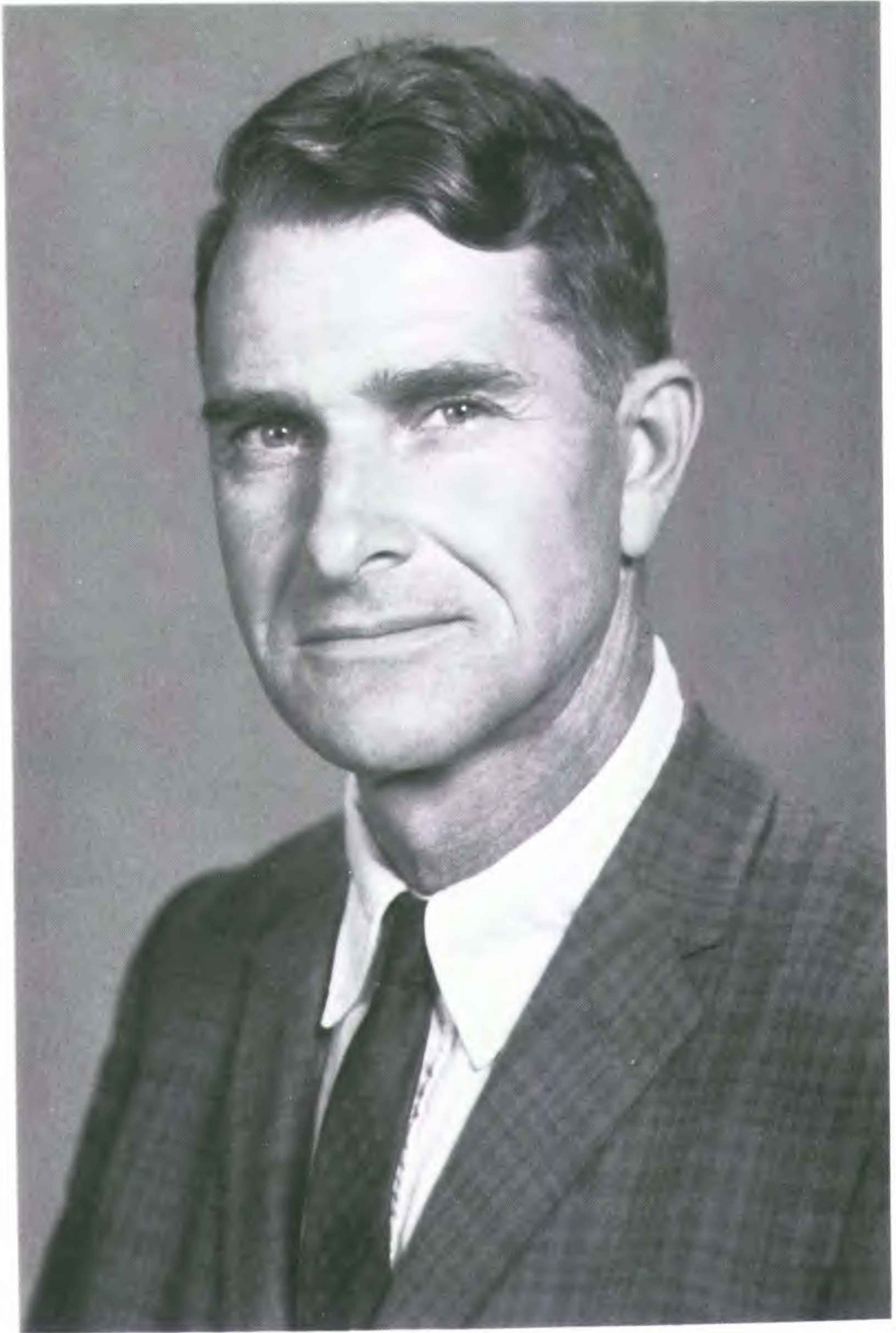
ALBION R. HODGDON

1909-1976

Albion Reed Hodgdon was born November 1, 1909, on Sawyer's Island, in Boothbay, Maine. He spent much of his boyhood on a farm in southeastern New Hampshire, attending grades one through seven in a one-room schoolhouse in Dover, where his family moved in 1914. In his early teens he developed a strong interest in native plants and vegetation, perhaps as the result of periodic "expeditions" into the surrounding countryside with his older brother Melville and another friend to study the local plants, birds and animals. Initially, at least, Melville was to keep track of the plants and Albion the birds, and an interest in birds remained with Albion throughout his life. A growing interest in plants led him to enroll in the Botany curriculum at the University of New Hampshire. He received a B.S. in Botany in 1930, then stayed on in the position of Assistant in Botany from 1930-1932, while working toward a Master's Degree. He received his M.S. in 1932 on completion of his thesis, entitled "The Flora of Strafford County, New Hampshire." He then enrolled in the graduate program at Harvard University where he worked as an Instructor in Botany while studying for his Ph.D. in plant taxonomy with Dr. Merritt Lyndon Fernald. His dissertation took the form of a monographic study of the genus *Lechea* (Cistaceae).

Upon conferral of the doctorate in 1936 Dr. Hodgdon returned to the University of New Hampshire as Instructor in Botany, a position he held until 1941, when he was promoted to Associate Professor. From 1942 to 1947, while the Botany faculty was united with Zoology and Microbiology in a Biology Department, Dr. Hodgdon served as Head of the Botany section and of the Agricultural Research Station. In 1947 he became Head of an independent Botany Department, and served in that capacity for twenty years, resigning as Head in 1967 to devote more time to teaching, research and professional activities.

In 1940 he married Audrey McKown. She was his distant cousin, whom he had first met as a boy of about seven during childhood visits to the family seat in Boothbay. They were both from seafaring stock; Audrey, as the daughter of a sea captain, had spent a goodly part of her childhood with her family aboard ship, sailing to all



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parts of the world. Courtship followed graduate study, and they were eventually married in Malden, Massachusetts. He is survived by his wife, a daughter, Ariel, two sons, Alan and Anthony, and four grandchildren.

Throughout his career Dr. Hodgdon's research activities centered largely on the flora of New Hampshire and adjacent areas. He maintained a special interest in the taxonomy of the genus *Rubus*. He was an acknowledged authority on the flora of New England and published many papers on New England plants in *RHODORA*, either as sole author, or jointly with his principal collaborators, Radcliffe B. Pike and Frederic L. Steele. Other associates in research and publication include John A. Churchill, David S. Conant, William D. Countryman, Lesley M. Eastman, Merritt L. Fernald, Joanne Flint, Herbert Friedlander, Dominic P. Gange, P. Giguere, A. D. Hastings, Edward J. Hehre, Stanley B. Krochmal, Henry R. Tyler, Jr., and Leonard P. Wolfe, Jr.

In the 1960's, in collaboration with Radcliffe Pike, he devoted considerable attention to the floristics and phytogeography of the coastal islands of Maine and New Brunswick, Canada, especially Grand Manan and the Wolf Islands in the Bay of Fundy.

Dr. Hodgdon's broad taxonomic and ecological interests led him to travel widely, to Tennessee, Michigan and New Brunswick, Canada, while working on *Lechea*; to Cuba in 1936; to Mexico and California, accompanied by brother Melville, in 1938; to the Arctic Slope of Alaska in 1952; to Great Britain in 1964; to Scotland and Ireland in 1966; to Europe in 1968; to the islands of the Caribbean for several summer vacations; and to the Galapagos Islands in 1973.

Over the years Dr. Hodgdon held memberships in a number of national professional organizations, including the American Association for the Advancement of Science, Botanical Society of America, American Society of Plant Taxonomists, Ecological Society of America, Nature Conservancy, Society of the Sigma Xi, and the Society for the Study of Evolution. However, he concentrated most of his activity and energy in dedicated service to such New England organizations as the New Hampshire Academy of Sciences (now disbanded), the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests, the Audubon Society, and especially the New England Botanical Club. He was a regular participant in Audubon bird counts and was frequently called on to lead bird watching trips as he knew the birds by their calls as well as by sight, and had only to

stand in the stillness of the forest and listen to know what birds might be present. He was elected to membership in the New England Botanical Club on December 2, 1932, and was an active member until incapacitated in 1974. He served the Club from 1962 until 1974 as Editor-in-Chief of its journal, RHODORA, an effort in which he enjoyed the close collaboration of Radcliffe Pike. He was elected President of the Club in 1974.

A champion of sensible environmental causes, Dr. Hodgdon was instrumental in the preservation for public use and enjoyment of such New Hampshire natural areas as Odiorne State Park in Rye, the University of New Hampshire Natural Area in Durham, the U.N.H. Squam Lake Refuge, the Spruce Hole Bog in Lee, and *Rhododendron* colonies in Harrisville, Hopkinton, and Fitzwilliam. Some of these activities became the subjects of papers in RHODORA. At U.N.H. he played a significant part in the establishment of the first doctoral program, and in 1957 the first two doctoral awards made by the University went to botany graduate students.

Dr. Hodgdon considered as one of his major achievements the development of the herbarium at U.N.H., now designated as the Albion R. Hodgdon Herbarium. Starting with a small nucleus of perhaps 1500 specimens, which were present in the early 1930's, he developed a collection which today numbers about 82,000 specimens of vascular plants and approximately 36,000 specimens of marine algae. Included in the herbarium are several historically important personal or institutional collections of New England plants which have been donated or placed on permanent or long-term loan. The associated Sumner Pike Library contains about 1500 volumes of floristic and taxonomic literature.

As a teacher Dr. Hodgdon excelled. His field-oriented courses on the flora of New Hampshire, aquatic plants, taxonomy, and phytogeography attracted innumerable students, few of whom could match his stamina or stride on a White Mountains trail. To many of these he became simply and affectionately known as "Doc". In him they found a genuine and sincere friend and mentor, a gentle philosopher who was always helpful, kind and generous with his time. He had an enthusiasm for art, science, and life that was a source of inspiration to many. In this respect his unique personality is perhaps best summed up in the words of the following poem by Helen Field Watson (1949):

HODGDON OF DURHAM

Hodgdon of Durham is a timeless man
Mature in judgement, in emotions prime
One might imagine that a century's span
Had left Thoreau of Concord past his time
And Hodgdon — like the man who planted beans,
Translated Plato and the woodchuck's talk —
Now prowls for mosses where a moist rock leans
And travels miles to show where lichens walk.
He treats as kin of his a Pine or Man
And looks at each with something near surprise.
His life is clean-cut, built on Nature's plan;
He seems appraising self with other's eyes,
And yet is heedless of unruly hair,
Frayed coat, worn shoes, assuming friends will know
Tree bark and clothes but give protective care
To finer inside portions as they grow.
All that he owns he uses for one end —
To bring together Nature and a Man
on equal terms — an honor to each friend —
Though Nature long was here when Man began.
He walks at ease in any company
With quiet born of years of listening,
With eagerness on leash, alert to see
The other's silent need of anything.
Well-meaning folks, consumed with misplaced zeals,
Remind him of his duty to implore
New grace, not knowing this man often kneels
In fervid worship on God's forest floor.

Through his generous and unstinting contributions of time, effort, and knowledge over a period of more than forty years "Doc" Hodgdon touched the lives of many, earning the love and respect of his many students, colleagues and friends in New England, as well as the respect of the botanical community. On December 31, 1976, he passed away after a long convalescence resulting from an automobile accident in August, 1974. In his honor the Albion R. Hodgdon Memorial Fund has been established with gifts from friends, family, former students and associates. The fund will be used to support the work of the Hodgdon Herbarium. Friends who wish to may send contributions designated for this fund to: Chairman, Department of Botany and Plant Pathology, University of New Hampshire, Durham, N.H. 03824.

REFERENCE

- WATSON, HELEN FIELD. 1949. "Field Notes". The Wings Press. Mill Valley, California. 88 pp.

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